

# Garbage contract approved; includes new recycling bins

By: KELLY JOSEPHSEN

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Village Council members approved a new garbage collection contract last week that they say enhances recycling and preserves twice weekly side-yard or backyard pickup of regular trash, weekly yard waste collection and monthly bulk waste collection – all while saving residents \$20 a year.

The Council passed the five-year agreement with Choice Environmental Services, Inc. on Tuesday, March 16, despite one member's concerns the process was being rushed.

While Council member Michael Kelly said he felt local leaders had inadequate time to vet the contract, which they received the day of the meeting, others said the deal is clearly fair and needs to be enacted quickly because the Village's current agreement with Waste Management, Inc. expires at the end of March.

"I couldn't be more uncomfortable with this," Kelly, who would record the lone no vote, said. "We're seeing this, we're analyzing this, we're negotiating this, and we're doing it all in a 15-minute period. This is a big contract and deserves more analysis than this."

On the other hand, Vice Mayor Enrique Garcia remarked, "We have done our homework, and as well as we can tell, it's a fair contract;" while Council member Jorge Mendia added, "It's an improvement over the last one. It's cheaper than the last one."

Indeed, the new contract allowed the Council to set homeowners' annual bills at \$475, or \$20 less than the current \$495 rate; and keep the system status quo for residents in terms of when and how they put out their trash, recycling, yard waste and bulk waste.

"It'll be the same schedule as right now," Public Works Director Armando Nunez said.

The Council had discussed the basic agreement March 9, and after that discussion voted unanimously on a service package and to confirm Choice Environmental as the vendor.

Village Manager Chip Iglesias had presented a variety of options on the 9th.

Officials intentionally drafted the solid

Council members were enthused about the contract March 9. That continued, for the most part, on the 16th.

Kelly said his concern is not with Choice Environmental – "I think the vendor sounds great and the deal the Manager negotiated is great," he noted – but with the fact that local leaders had just hours to review a 30-page contract filled with legalese. He noted the contract will be in place for five years, so he wants to make sure the Council gets it right.

Kelly's concerns only grew when Council members renegotiated part of the contract from the dais, albeit in the Village's favor, by getting Sage to agree to cap fuel cost increases at 7 percent for the life of the contract. Kelly noted the fuel issue was new in the

March 16 documents, and he didn't want to rush to a decision without making a full review.

Iglesias said Kelly's concerns are valid, as did Davey.

"It's a fair statement," Iglesias said; while Davey noted, "I understand your point, but I don't know what the solution is."

The Manager agreed, noting the reason the process feels rushed is the March 16 meeting normally would have been March 23, but was pushed forward due to the Sony Ericsson Open at Crandon Park. Had the Council been operating under its typical schedule of meeting the second and fourth Tuesday of the month, he would have had another week to prepare the contract and present it to Council

members for their review.

Iglesias added because of the scheduling change, the Council won't meet again until April 13 – which is a problem, as the community is already operating under an extension with Waste Management and he isn't sure if the firm would agree to another extension after this one expires March 29.

With that in mind, the majority of Council members said they are comfortable with the language negotiated by Iglesias and Village Attorneys, and want to get the new vendor on board as soon as possible. After the 6-1 vote, Iglesias said he will start working right away on a transition plan to get Choice Environmental up and running in Key Biscayne.

## Residents can help Village get Google project

By: KELLY JOSEPHSEN

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Village officials are applying to be a pilot city for the Google Fiber for Communities project, which would make ultra high speed Internet connections available to the public, and they're asking local residents for their help.

Residents are urged to nominate Key Biscayne by tomorrow's deadline by submitting information about the community and why it would make a good test site for Google's

initiative. A link is available on the Village website, [www.keybiscayne.fl.gov](http://www.keybiscayne.fl.gov).

According to Village officials, Google's project would benefit everyone – kids, students, professionals, business owners and anyone who uses the Internet for communication and education.

"The ability to have a high-speed fiber Internet connection leads to enhanced productivity and broadens how the Internet will be used by our residents, students, and businesses on the island," Village Manager Chip Iglesias remarked.

Officials believe the technology would allow the local government to enhance services it provides to residents, and would also benefit the Key Biscayne K-8 Center and other island schools.

Google will provide all the infrastructure necessary for the project, which means running fiber lines to the area and providing fiber-to-home connections.

The selected communities will be announced later this year. For more information, visit the Village website at [www.keybiscayne.fl.gov](http://www.keybiscayne.fl.gov).

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Beautiful new 4 bedroom 3.5 bath elevated Key West style home, hurricane windows, marble and wood floors beautiful pool patio area. \$1,750,000 also for rent \$7,000/month unfurnished. James Salas 305-300-6764

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### Key Biscayne Rentals

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